

West Sussex County Council Code of Corporate Governance

1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Sussex County Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted according to the law and proper standards. It is also responsible for ensuring that public money is properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively. To meet these responsibilities the County Council needs to ensure there are proper arrangements for the governance of its business and for the management of its resources. This Code of Corporate Governance sets out how the County Council will do so and be seen to do so.
- 1.2 The West Sussex County Council Code of Corporate Governance has been developed in line with and is consistent with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework document (published in 2016) "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government":

'Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved. To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entity's objectives while acting in the public interest at all times. Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.'

- 1.3 This Code represents best practice for developing and maintaining a local system of governance. The framework defines seven principles and sub-principles, as set out in paragraph 3, which should be reflected in authorities' local codes having due regard to each authority's structure, type, function and size.

2. Key Principles of Standards in Public Life

- 2.1 The underlying principles of the Code are derived from a series of important reports on governance including the Nolan Committee Report on Standards in Public Life. These principles are:

Openness – essential to ensure that all stakeholders have confidence in decision-making, the management processes and individuals within the County Council.

Inclusivity – ensures that all stakeholders and potential stakeholders have the opportunity to engage effectively in the decision-making processes.

Integrity – based upon honesty, selflessness and objectivity involving high standards of propriety and probity on the part of those entrusted with control of public funds and the management of the County Council's affairs.

Accountability – process by which the County Council, its members and officers are held responsible for their actions and decisions.

- 2.2 Through these principles, the County Council will seek to deliver good corporate governance combining robust systems and processes with effective leadership and high standards of behaviour.
- 2.3 The County Council has a clear commitment to ensure services or its suppliers or partners deliver the most appropriate combinations of quality, value and choice to all residents in accordance with the Council's stated vision – the Future West Sussex Plan.
- 2.4 The vision as approved by the County Council is the driver that aims to put the community at the head of our services and ensure that what the Council provides or commissions are given and designed by or with, residents, businesses, partners and communities enabling residents to experience a better quality of life in West Sussex in relation to the start of life, their independence in later life as well as their working life and benefitting from the economy of the area.

3. Principles and Sub-Principles of the Code

- A Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
- D Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

A full explanation of the principles together with the underpinning supporting policies, procedures and assurance can be found in the original CIPFA/SOLACE guidance.

4. Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 An annual review will be undertaken to ensure compliance with the code and with its requirements. The outcome of the review will be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement published each year with the Annual Accounts and reported to Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee. The Statement is subject to verification and certification by the Council's external auditor.
- 4.2 Following its agreement by the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, the Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Leader and the Chief

Executive. The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Services has been given responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the code and for reporting at least annually on compliance with the code. An action plan will be issued alongside the statement to identify any work that needs to be done to maintain the effectiveness of the governance system and it will show how that actions plan will be monitored. In fulfilling this responsibility the Executive Director will propose any necessary changes to ensure that the code is current, relevant and changes in circumstances are properly reflected.

5. Further Information

- 5.1 The County Council is aware of its duty to promote good governance and is satisfied that it already has a well-established and robust Constitution and other good governance documents and arrangements in place.
- 5.2 The purpose of this '**Code of Corporate Governance**' is to provide a simple document which will, together with the current Annual Governance Statement, provide the continuing assurance required. All of the material which makes up the full framework of governance and assurance will be identifiable and traceable from the Annual Statement.